

FEMA, Territorial Partnership Paves Path to Rebuild Arthur Richards School

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ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands – Hurricane Maria’s winds and rains left Arthur Richards Junior High School in ruins in September 2017. FEMA and the Territory made it a priority to assess damage to the school’s six buildings and grounds, collaborate to build out temporary modular classrooms for students and ultimately replace the school.

FEMA approved replacement of Arthur Richards in 2020 and demolition of the Frederiksted school began in 2020 as well. Plans to replace Arthur Richards have hit another milestone in the new year with FEMA’s approval of a \$242.5 million project to rebuild the school.

The federal and territorial partnership to replace Arthur Richards spotlights FEMA’s mission to support the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education’s plans to repair and rebuild public schools damaged from hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017.

“Collaboration and diligence between FEMA and the Territory has laid the foundation for a new Arthur Richards Junior High School. We stand firm in our commitment to help the U.S. Virgin Islands repair and rebuild schools that will provide a safe and modern environment for the Territory’s children. Building schools smarter and stronger will ensure children return to classrooms quicker after future storms,” said U.S. Virgin Islands Recovery Director Kristen Hodge.

FEMA has awarded \$209.2 million through its Public Assistance program toward the Territory’s plan to rebuild Arthur Richards. Insurance proceeds will cover \$10 million and a non-federal cost share of 10% will cover remaining costs for the project to replace Arthur Richards. The replacement of Arthur Richards is authorized as a Public Assistance Alternative Procedures project and clears a path for the Territory to rebuild the school at the site of the Evelyn Williams School in Mount Pleasant on St. Croix.



FEMA

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“The Office of Disaster Recovery thanks FEMA for this obligation which will set the standard for new school construction in the Territory in accordance with the Department of Education’s Facilities Master Plan. This was a monumental joint effort which has provided funding for the first new school reconstruction as we work to modernize schools across the Territory,” said U.S. Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien.

As of January 5, 2022, FEMA has obligated a combined \$444 million for emergency and permanent repairs to U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education facilities damaged during the 2017 Category 5 hurricanes.



The Territory began the demolition of Arthur Richards Junior High School on St. Croix in 2020. FEMA has approved a \$242.5 million project to replace the school, which was damaged during Hurricane Maria in September 2017. Photo Courtesy of the U.S. Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery.

